

Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd
Minutes
Board Meeting
10:30 am, 06 May 2004
Words In Time
1/484 King William Street

Present: N. Black, Graeme Charles, David Dinning, Tony O'Shea (Chairman)
and David Griffiths

1. Minutes.

That the minutes of the board meeting of 18 March 2004 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

2. Minutes of AGM of 25 February 2004 for information.

Noted

3. Appointment of Deputy Chairman:

That Graeme Charles be appointed Deputy Chairman until the AGM.

That Graeme Charles be authorized to register as a signatory to the CFV account at the Bendigo Bank.

4. CFNSW Conference

That Graeme Charles travel and accommodation costs be covered for the CFNSW conference.

It was noted that Graeme would discuss with CFNSW the potential for joint initiatives and liaise with ACCORD. It was also expected that he would meet with the lamb co-operative to develop a case study for Australia.coop.

5. Priorities

The priorities identified by the Secretary were noted:

Public advocacy - finalise submissions on associations and retirement villages. Watching briefs on letters to Bracks and Latham. Prepare submission on IAS, body corporates and vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers.

Financial strength - complete financial statements, prepare 2004-05 budget, vigorously follow-up CBAV funding and follow-up Bonlac and others.

Organisation of AGM and audit – begin planning for early audit and AGM and possibility of CFV conference – see Consultation Proposals

Insurance – resolve insurance. Subject to separate mailing.

Improved Governance - appoint Chair and recruit two new directors.

Co-operative Education - follow-up Co-operative College and AICUD and develop-operative education proposal for members

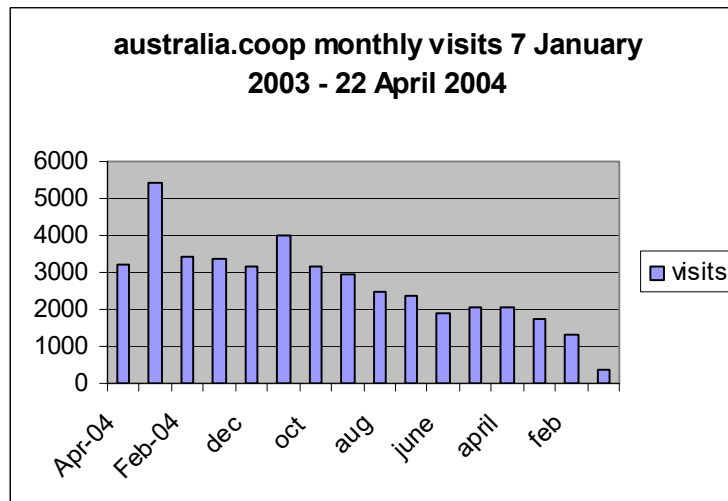
Consultation Proposals – determine the consultation content, the mode and location(s) e.g. CFV conference, member survey and member meetings and relationship to AGM.

6. Co-operative Education

There was a discussion of the development of the co-operative education proposal for presentation to members. It was noted that the AICUD proposal had not been received but that the UK Co-operative College had been in contact with Graeme Charles. He suggested that the most appropriate course of action might be to focus on member rather than director education. The Co-operative Group's Know Your Co-operative was given as an example with four modules – Vo-operative Group Up to Date, Co-operative Behavior, Democracy and Accountability and The Co-operative Movement. A copy of Know Your Co-op brochure is enclosed with the minutes. He reported that the College had proposed a pilot be undertaken in Australia and was forwarding by mail a CD with course content.

7. australia.coop

Updated statistics were tabled:



Update top twelve downloads/views australia coop between 1 – 22 April 2004:

Co-op Start Up Manual	183
TPRC CFNSW	127
Co-op Directors Kit	123
Co-op Dictionary	105
Feasibility Study	78

Ias	70
Top 2003	80
Coop governance publications	66
Race Mathews Looting Mutuals	65
Co-operative Governance Publications	55
Why co-operatives fail	45
The Formation decision	45

8. Submissions:

That the following be approved:

Approval retrospectively

Co-operatives and Local Government draft submission mailed to directors on 14 April 2004. Final submission forwarded 23 April 2004 is enclosed. Submission due: 23 April 2004

Approval

Submission on Review of Retirement Villages Act 1986 Proposed Legislation Changes 2004 mailed to directors 14 April 2004 Submission due: Open-ended i.e. asap.

Approval

Submission mailed to directors 1 April 2004 on Review of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 by Consumer Affairs Victoria. Submission due: 31 May 2004

Approved submission preparation

On Consumer Affairs Victoria's Discussion Paper What do we mean by 'vulnerable ' and 'disadvantaged' consumers?

Approved submission preparation

On Consumer Affairs Victoria's Future Directions Paper Bodies Corporate.

The board congratulated the Secretary on the submissions.

9. Correspondence:

The following correspondence was noted:

07 April 2004 letter to The Hon. Steve Bracks, The Premier of Victoria, re Tattersalls ASX Listing

15 April 2004 letter to Mark Latham, Leader of the Opposition, re reform to Trade Practices Act and co-operatives. Copied to CFNSW.

21 April 2004 registration form forwarded for Graeme Charles attendance at CFNSW conference. CFNSW has agreed that Graeme will be eligible for the member discount. CFNSW has been appropriately thanked.

10. Budget

The Deputy Chairman tabled a budget for the next six months. A copy of the budget is attached.

11. Consultation and Future

Two discussion papers were tabled and are attached:

Our Challenge Our Choice Our Future

Has been prepared to provide a basis for the development of a consultation process and the key consultation decisions.

Where is australia.coop going and why?

Has been prepared to establish a context for the relevance of australia. Coop to CFV and its achievement as a CFV initiative.

It was noted that as a priority a consultation document should be prepared for individual discussions with existing and potential high-subscription members and non-members and for presentation to either the AGM or a SGM.

The following high-subscription actual and potential members were identified:

Bonlac
Fonterra
Genetics Australia
Gippsland Herd Improvement
Murray Goulburn
Rabobank

It was agreed that the AGM should be held no later than September 2004 and that members should not be asked to pay the 2004-05 annual subscription pending the AGM.

It was noted that it was necessary to identify sustainable funds required and to develop as far as practical the co-operative education proposal.

12. Next meeting: 16 June 2004

Prepared: David Griffiths, 10 May 2004

Approved: Graeme Charles, 16 May 2004

Our Challenge Our Choice Our Future

David Griffiths

The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis for the development of consultation paper to be developed and distributed to CFV members.

A consultation process requires purpose and content.

The main challenges for the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd are twofold – internal and external.

The internal challenges include:

A divergent and disparate co-operative ‘movement’ that does not recognize each other and is not meaningfully committed to co-operation between co-operatives.

The inability and/or unwillingness of the co-operative movement to popularize and aggressively advocate the co-operative option in public policy debate.

An inability and/or unwillingness to be clear and explicit about and for the co-operative option as neither an extension of the state or an investor-owned capitalist enterprise.

The continued demutualization of co-operatives and co-operative like businesses eg. Pivot and Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory.

The external challenges include:

A public policy vacuum that does not engage co-operation as a serious option for public policy choices.

Less and less people are aware of co-operatives and the contribution they have made and are making to economic democracy and economic growth.

The investor-owned option is considered the de facto and normal option for organizing the economy and society.

Professional adviser ignorance of or opposition to the co-operative option.

The absence of a co-operative education in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd (CFV)

The CFV reflects and reinforces these challenges.

CFV membership peaked with the new Co-operatives Act which required co-operatives to introduce new rules. Paul Martin in a 2000 member survey predicted that many member co-operatives who joined the CFV during this period of rule change would not remain members when their rules were changed. The prediction was accurate and fulfilled.

The finances of CFV have been disproportionately dependent on a small group of large co-operatives e.g.

Bonlac

Genetics Australia

Gippsland Herd Improvement

Murray Goulburn

Pivot

Victorian Producers' Co-operative Ltd

Warrnambool Co-operative Society Ltd

There is a continuous challenge for CFV to reinvent and redevelop its relevance

Priorities Internal and External

Internal

Maintain and strengthen the success of australia.coop.

Develop an ongoing and used co-operative education program.

Maintain and strengthen public advocacy.

Revive Victorian Co-operative News.

Recruit two directors.

External

Work towards a decisive influence in government at all levels. Government policies should reflect general and specific potentialities of the co-operative movement and their requirements for development. Co-operative policies should ensure appropriate institutional support systems.

Participate in national and state debates and within many different areas to on what is best for our members and the co-operative movement generally.

Working towards Australian membership of the International Co-operative Alliance. ACCORD is a member of the ICA but is not a co-operative member-based organization. In recent years, the CFNSW did join the ICA for a one year period. The CFV has proposed to other State Federations that the CCA should be the Australian member of the ICA but to date this has not been supported by other Federations.

Co-operative Consultation

The CFV consultation priority needs to be based on a clear strategy and answers to each of these questions:

Why are we consulting?

What is the aim of the consultation process?

What is the priority between providing information, information getting, information exchange and decision-making?

Who will we consult?

Who are the stakeholders? How many of them will we consult? Will we and can we consult with members, former members and potential members.

How will we consult?

What mode(s) of consultation will we use – individual meetings, group meetings, a future conference and a member survey.

What will we be consulting about?

What issue(s) will we be raising in the consultation process and will this be documented? Will the consultation be about single issues or general and non-defined issues? What will we say about what we have been doing, our achievements and limitations and what we would like to be doing with what resources.

Where will we consult?

This depends on the mode of consultation. How long will the consultation process be? What is a short time period? What is a long time period? What are the strengths and limitations of a short and long time period?

When will we consult?

What time period is necessary for an efficient and effective consultation process?

Who will organize the consultation process?

What is an effective and efficient consultation?

How do we ensure the consultation process is both representative and meaningful and not hijacked?

SWOT

A beginning of this process is a SWOT analysis of CFV – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
australia.coop	Low membership
Co-operative publications – australia.coop, Member Benefit, Our Energy, The Co-operative Formation Decision, What is a co-operative? and Why do co-operatives fail as co-operatives?	Limited income limits activities and achievements
Initiated joint Federation submission to Dawson Committee (V, NSW, WA and QLD)	
ICA liaison	Ignored in public policy debate.
Opportunities	Threats
Our Energy International Co-operative Alliance ACCORD	Continued demutualization of mutual businesses. Further demutualization of government policy
Development of an ongoing co-operative education program.	
Establishment of annual co-operative conference.	
Strengthen relevance of CCA	Ambivalent status of CCA

First draft: 27 April 2004

Where is australia.coop going, why and with what consequences?

David Griffiths

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to briefly assess the achievements of australia.coop and its ongoing relevance to the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd.

Consistency with Mission and Objectives: A starting point is the mission and objectives of the CFV. Is australia.coop relevant to the mission and objectives of CFV.

Conclusion: australia.coop reflects and reinforces CFV's Mission and Objectives.

Consistency with member expressed needs: The establishment and development of Australia.coop is consistent with member needs as expressed in a comprehensive member survey in 2000. **Conclusion: australia.coop is meeting the expressed needs of members.**

Measurable achievement: Comprehensive statistics enable an assessment on the impact of australia.coop. **Conclusion: australia.coop has had an extraordinary and unique quantifiable impact.**

Consistency with Mission and Objectives

What, then, are the mission and objectives of CFV?

Mission

To develop and promote the co-operative movement as a means of satisfying the economic and social needs of people.

Objectives

Help improve the performance of member co-operatives in the provision of services to their members.

Make representations to government on legislation and policies to facilitate the development of co-operatives.

Promote co-operatives to the public.

Facilitate and opromote the formation of co-operatives.

Educate co-operative members and the community at large in co-operative principles and practices.

Facilitate co-operation between co-operatives.

Mission/Objectives		Rating relevance of Australia.coop
To develop and promote the co-operative movement as a means of satisfying the economic and social needs of people.	Over the last 10 years australia.coop has been the most successful CFV initiative in terms of contact numbers and growth.	*****
Help improve the performance of member co-operatives in the provision of services to their members.		**
Make representations to government on legislation and policies to facilitate the development of co-operatives.	Over the last 10 years australia.coop has been	***
Promote co-operatives to the public.	Over the last 10 years australia.coop has been	*****
Facilitate and promote the formation of co-operatives.	Over the last 10 years australia.coop has been	*****
Educate co-operative members and the community at large in co-operative principles and practices.		*****
Facilitate co-operation between co-operatives.		*****

Ratings:

* inadequate

** adequate

*** good
**** very good
*****excellent

Consistency with member expressed needs

In 2000 there was a comprehensive survey of members conducted by independent consultant Paul Martin. The survey included members views of the representation role of the CFV. In the following extract from the report, members clearly supported a greater level of promotional activity by CFV.

Effectiveness of Representation by CFV	Number of Co-operatives
No response	2
don't know	6
poor	1
not effective	2
adequate	3
effective	5
very effective	3

Recommendation 16:
That the newsletter include a regular listing of activities of the board and the executive officer particularly in regard to activities where those parties are representing the CFV to the external world.

6.4.6. Comments Regarding the CFV's Representation Role (Question 14)

Half of the respondents failed to make any reply to this question and one responded that they could not say as they didn't know, while another commented that the representation role was adequate. Of those who did comment about specific issues, their focus was upon supporting greater promotion of the co-operative way of working and the co-operative movement.

Comments Upon Representation by CFV	Number of Co-operatives
No response	12
more promotion needed	7
appears adequate	1
should be stronger (no target specified)	1
don't know, can't say	1

The seven responses stating that "more promotion is needed" is further sectorised into those groups towards whom the respondents suggested that greater promotional effort be directed.

Promotion is needed towards	Number of Co-operatives
the community in general	5
governments	4
the business sector	1

More than one response was received from a number of co-operatives.

This support for a greater level of promotional activity, particularly to the broader community and to governments, serves to underline the desire for promotion evident in responses to Question 9. It is common among special interest groups that they feel that their cause is not being promoted sufficiently. This is a very difficult task for all small, special interest groups, but is clearly a need perceived by nearly one-third of members responding.

Recommendations regarding the promotion issue and CFV have previously been noted.

Of members who responded, nine said that there needed to be more promotion of the co-operative option – 40% to the community in general, 50% to government and 10% to the business sector. This is being achieved by australia.coop.

CFV, however, is not just reliant on australia.coop. While australia.coop is the flagship of this promotional activity, since 2000 the following publications and brochures have also been published:

- australia.coop
- Member Benefit
- Our Energy
- The Co-opAdvantage Director Kit
- The Co-operative Formation Decision
- The Co-op Start Up Manual
- Why do co-operatives fail as co-operatives?
- What is a co-operative?

Measurable achievement.

An interaction is defined as when there is a relationship between two parties initiated by one or other party e.g

- Correspondence
- Email
- Fax
- Meetings
- Telephone
- Web site visits

Measuring achieving is difficult in the absence of a Strategic Plan. Even in a small organization such as the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd, a strategic plan provides the basis for objectively determining what CFV is trying to do – its mission and objectives, what its strategies are for meeting these objectives and what have been the outcomes.

A Strategic Plan was developed for 1998-200. The Secretary subsequently provided a review of the strategic plan and a draft of a new strategic plan. The board, however, declined to discuss the review and adopt a new strategic plan. The consequence of this fateful decision is vagueness and imprecision and, therefore, an inability of the board to provide members with a coherent and accountable report on activities and achievements.

The basic statistics for australia.coop are remarkable compared with any other activity of CFV since formation in 1970: total visits: 42,667;

total hits 183,767; total pages viewed 122,676; total files downloaded 77,316; and total data transferred: 6 gigabytes (7 January 2003 – 20 April 2004).

These need to be put into the context of the CFV most recent peak level of activity in the 1995-98 period: 51 co-operatives requested legislation information up to 28 February 1999; 70 co-operatives attended legislation seminars in 1997; 29 co-operatives engaged the then Secretary of CFV, Mr. Tony Gill, as a consultant to update their rules up to 28 February 1999; 53 co-operatives sought advice on model rules and rule checklists as of 28 February and 53 co-operatives sought phone advice between 1 July 1997 and 28 February 1999. Adding these as if they were separate brings us to a total of 256 – a more than satisfactory outcome. However:

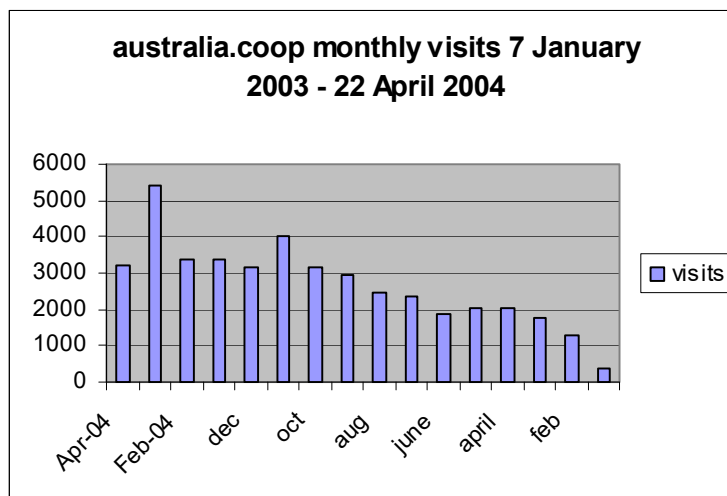
1995-1999 Interactions	2003-04 Interactions (7 January 2003 – 20 April 2004)
256	42,667

While comprehensive, the australia.coop statistics do not enable us to identify:

- Victorian-specific visitors
- CFV member visitors
- Co-operative visitors

These statistics could be generated by requiring visitors to log in but this would reduce accessibility and, therefore, visits. An online survey was initiated with 199 accessing the survey page but the processing was dysfunctional.

Interactions with CFV have ebbed and flowed before the establishment of australia.coop. What is further distinctive about australia.coop and other CFV activities is continuous growth and continuous improvement e.g.



australia.coop hits, views and downloads
7 January 2003 – 20 April 2004

Total visits: 42,667
Total hits: 183,767
Total pages: 122,676
Total files: 77,316
Total data transferred: 6 gigabytes

CFNSW submission TPRC	2647 (1)
Co-op Dictionary (dg)	1550 (1)
Co-opAdvantage Director Kit	1,658 (1)
Looting Mutuals (rm)	1298
Co-op Start Up Manual (gc)	1674 (1)
What is a co-operative feasibility study? (dg)	1097
CFV submission Trade Practices RC (dg)	644
Why do co-operatives fail as co-ops? (dg)	832
Co-op Start Up Manual Summary (dg)	564
CFNSW additional submission TPRC	537
The Formation Decision (dg and gc)	690
Race Mathews intro (dg)	503
Top Co-operatives	731
Cunm (rm)	557
International Accounting Standards	672
Gary Lewis resume	532
Cs Co-operative Retailing (gc)	499
CFV submission Charities (dg)	299
Cs Alpaca Co-operative (acoop)	300
Cs NETC (netc)	275
Cs Co-operative Purchasing (ih)	303
H YCW Co-operative Movement (dg)	205
Cs SmarTimber	279
What is a co-operative manager? (dg)	270

1

These are a mixture of hits, page views and downloads. Since 18 October 2003 they are only page views or downloads. Others are downloads and/or page views.

australia.coop praised

“Congratulations CFV on an excellent web site.”

Gary Lewis

Australian co-operative historian

“Congratulations on the launch of Australian coop. This is a major milestone for the co-operative community in Australia.”

Kay Nemoto

Poptel United, UK

“Congratulations on a very effective and attractive site.”

Dr. Race Mathews

Australian co-operative author and former Government Minister

“Your site is looking good.”

Helen Mc Call

Executive Officer, Co-operative Federation of NSW

“Everyone was thrilled with how the site meets the program goals for Community Names.”

Carolyn Hoover

Information Lead, dotCoop Operations Centre, Washington DC, USA

“I would like to congratulate you on your evolving website.”

Garry Cronan

General Manager, ACCORD

“I have perused your web pages and have found it to be first class.”

Myrtle Richards

Administrator, Kuru Kuru Co-operative College, Guyana

“Again, congratulations on the achievement.”

Jim Howard

Executive Officer, Co-operative Federation of Queensland

“You are doing good work and congratulations.”

Jenny de Villiers

Co-operative College, UK

“It is extremely helpful in expanding our knowledge of Australian co-operatives.”

Michael L. Cook

Robert D. Partridge Chair, University of Missouri – Columbia, USA

“My appreciation of your site. I think I have read just about every section and have it in my favorites.”

Cheryl Adison

NSW

"I am a frequent visitor and have enjoyed keeping up with the debate on demutualization that seems to be smoldering away in Australia."

John Rouse

Senior Officer and Group Leader, Co-operatives and Farmer Organizations
Group, Rural Initiatives and Participation Service, Food and Agriculture
Organization

Last updated: 1/19/2017